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Reminiscences

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Reminiscences

Sara Hightshoe

Abstract

We light our fire As the last rays of the sun Disappear from the sky. Hastily we gather Feathery
pine boughs To pad the ground Where we will sleep...

REMINISCENCES

We light our fire
As the last rays of the sun
Disappear from the sky.

Hastily we gather
Feathery pine boughs
To pad the ground
Where we will sleep.

The evening air is cool,
But as the fire warms us
We speak about our thoughts,
The day's impressions.

We are in the forest now,
Not too far below the timberline.
The silver moon glows radiantly
Over mountains high above us.

Shadows soften their craggy roughness;
Snow shimmers on their peaks,
And they seem now,
Benevolent and kind.

But earlier in the day
They were hard and tough,
Masters of the tiny specks
Of human life that crawled about
On their great sides.

Each step they controlled;
Each breath they measured.

The unexpected was always present.
The chimney that should not have been,
The rock that looked so steady and was not,
The small tree that looked so fragile
Yet proved a sturdy handhold.

The stern cliff that looked unclimbable
Yet yielded crevices a-plenty
In which to plant a toe, or finger.

The myriad tiny trails
That led us astray
Until we perched precariously
On the edge of the earth,
Looking down,

 Down,
 Down,
Into a sky-blue lake,
An infinitely minute meadow,
Or a death-gray boulder field.

The false summits
That lifted our hearts
And expectations,
Only to end in more gray rock,
More ice and snow,
And another summit ahead.

And finally, the real summit:
Truly the top of the world.

At last we rested.
As we sucked our oranges,
The bitter odor of the peel
Bit into our nostrils,
Making more pungent every detail,
And forever impressing the memory
Upon our hearts and minds.

Sunshine bright on the golden prairies
To the east;
Shimmering purple-gray storm clouds
Climbing high into the western sky,
Lightened only by a silver edge;
Blue-black sheen of the far distant
Mountains;
Snow glittering briefly
In a vagrant sunbeam;

Dull green slopes far below
With here and there
A lake, iridescent in the sunlight.

And then, the descent.
A cool mist fell on us,
Then light showers.

An overhanging ledge
Sheltered us.

We were dry and protected,
Watching the lightning.
Suddenly, the whole world was
Lighted up,
And one tremendous sheet of water
Shut out the view.

And just as suddenly,
It stopped, and the sun
Shone weakly
On a rain-soaked world.

The clouds passed over,
And again it was bright and warm,
And we were leaving our mountain,
Crossing timberline.

We wandered down through the forest,
But longing for the heights again,
We turned and climbed
Long into the afternoon, until
We reached this resting place.

The forest is quiet and peaceful.

We seek solitude
And here we find it.

We are at peace with the world
And ourselves.

— *Sara Hightshoe, H. Ec. Soph.*